

Michael F. Easley
Governor



State of North Carolina
Office of the Governor

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Contact: Renee Hoffman
Phone: 919/733-5612

GOV. EASLEY PROCLAIMS MAY 25th AS MISSING CHILDREN'S DAY

RALEIGH – Gov. Mike Easley has proclaimed Friday, May 25th as Missing Children's Day and he is encouraging parents to talk to their children about safety at home, in school and on the Internet.

"Last year, the N.C. Center for Missing Persons recorded 10,026 missing children," Easley said. "While about 95 percent of those children were returned safely to their families, hundreds are still missing. We must work together in our communities to ensure our children are safe and healthy."

Easley encouraged parents to keep the lines of communication open with their children, to know who their friends are, where they play and what is going on in their lives. Many of the missing children are teen runaways who do not fully realize the dangers of being away from their families.

Missing children cases also include those who are taken by a non-custodial parent or relative without permission and toddlers who have wandered from home and gotten lost. Most missing children cases do not involve foul play, and the children are either found by law enforcement officers or, in the case of runaways, return on their own.

In cases where a missing child age 17 or younger is believed to have been abducted by a stranger or is in danger of injury or death, North Carolina activates the AMBER Alert System so citizens can be the eyes and ears of law enforcement. The Center for Missing Persons activated the AMBER Alert System nine times in 2006, with the successful recovery of all but one child. Now lottery players and convenient store clerks can also be on the look out for missing children during AMBER Alerts. Earlier this month, electronic crawl messages began appearing on thousands of lottery terminals every time an AMBER Alert is issued.

The N.C. Center for Missing Persons is housed within the N.C. Department of Crime Control and Public Safety. To report a missing child or inquire about a program, call 1-800-522-5437 (toll free, nationwide, 24 hours a day). For more information about North Carolina's AMBER Alert System, visit www.nccrimecontrol.org/amberalert.

May 25th is set aside each year as National Missing Children's Day. It is the anniversary of the 1979 abduction of six-year-old Etan Patz from New York City. To learn more about the nationwide effort to help locate missing children, go to www.missingkids.org.

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Governor's Press Office
State Capitol, Raleigh, NC 27603-8001
(919) 733-5612 - Toll Free 1-800-662-7005
FAX (919) 733-5166